Smallest Iron Bridge.

A Tiny Structure That Spans the Harlem River at a Narrow Point.

Connects New York and Westchester County, and Is but Eighteen Feet Long.

FOOTPATH IS THIRTY INCHES WIDE.

A Person with a Market Basket Would Experience Considerable Inconvenience in Crossing—Only Thin People Can Pass Each Other.

New York may boast of having the largest and the smallest iron bridge in the world. It is not generally known that the Brooklyn Bridge has its counterpart at the extreme upper end of New York in a tiny iron footbridge connecting Manhattan Island with the mainland. It is probably the tiniest structure of its kind ever built. The little bridge is so very small that it looks like a toy bridge or some bridge builder's model. It is a perfectly constructed iron truss bridge in miniature. One end of the complex iron truss rests on the very northernmost tip of Manhattan Island, and the other on the edge of Westchester County. It spans the Harlem River, which at this point is so narrow that it can almost be jumped across. The bridge is exactly thirty inches in width. The iron frames, or trusses, which form the sides and support the passageway of the bridge are nearly ten feet in height and reach high above the heads of those crossing it. These iron trusses, which are composed of a great many uprights and crosspieces, give the structure the appearance of a narrow cage.

The bridge is so ridiculously narrow that a very stout person would be forced to do some squeezing to get through. Only very thin people can pass each other on the bridge.

Fortunately the bridge is very short, and before any one attempts to cross it he waits until the one who occupies it has got to the end of his journey. The diminutive dimensions of the bridge which brings travellers into New York City, of course, limit its utility for carrying traffic. A woman with a large market basket, for instance, cannot get across unless she holds the basket directly in front of her. It is, besides, rather too narrow to allow a wheelbarrow to be pushed over it, and it is not half wide enough to allow even a narrow cart to get through. Fortunately, at the end of New York there is only about one fifty-thousandth of the number of people who cross the water at the other end. Like the Bridge at the other end of New York, however, it is often overcrowded during the busy hours of the day.

If the same crowd which crosses the Brooklyn Bridge were to leave the island by this other bridge, it would take this crowd over two months to get across. But the tiny bridge has its rush hours, as well as its giant counterpart. These come in the early morning and at about 6 o'clock at night. If it happens that twenty people start to go over the bridge just as the same sized crowd start to cross in the opposite direction, there must be a regular bridge jam. When this happens it takes just as long for this crowd to get across as it takes the enormous crowd to cross during the rush hours of the Brooklyn Bridge.

The cross street at the New York approach to the bridge is Two Hundred and Eighteenth street, which is the last street on Manhattan Island. Across the little stream, which is nearly choked with cat tails and rushes, there stands the sleepy little village of Kingsbridge. The traffic between this country town and Manhattan Island is so light that the little footbridge meets all demands. The surroundings are exceedingly simple and picturesque. One of the few buildings at the end of New York is a little country store, which displays a little sign over the door which reads, "Cash or Barter." This is probably the last relic of this quaint old custom in New York. The farmers carry baskets of eggs and other farm produce over the little bridge which they trade or barter in the little store for candles or farm implements or provisions, while in the woods near-by preparations are being made to tap the maple trees for their sap, which is to be boiled and converted into sugar in a maple sugar camp right here in New York City.

Hoodooed by a Brilliant Opal.

The Poor Old Shackamaxon Can Explain Its Tale of Woe.

Collided with Everything in the Harbor Simply Because an Unlucky Jewel Was Aboard.

SORROWS OF MEN WHO WORE IT.

All the Ills of Mankind Seem to Follow the People Who Wore This Symbol of Misfortune.

A certain small stone set as a scarfpin is the avowed hoodoo of the Ellis Island steamboat Shackamaxon, and is said to be responsible for all the disasters recently reported as having occurred to that steamboat, on which Dr. Joseph H. Senner, the United States Commissioner of Immigration, and so many others risked their lives until she was taken off. The hoodoo stone is an opal, now in the possession of J. J. Hampton, one of the Ellis Island officers.

Mr. Hampton said that while the stone is his property, he would not keep it in his possession for any consideration. He vows that bad luck attaches to it and disaster follows it. Consequently he keeps it in a phial, carefully corked and wrapped up in a dark cloth, as it is claimed the light has an effect on the opaline brilliancy of the stone, and the more brilliant it is the greater the danger following it. The opal was innocently worn on board the Shackamaxon during all the recent disasters to that boat. Engineer Delaney was wearing the scarfpin containing the hoodoo opal on board the "Shack" when the last smash-up occurred. Delaney had purchased the pin from Hampton at a reasonable price, knowing of its history of attendant danger, but when he got nearly killed in that accident nothing would induce him, he said, to keep the stone.

Eugene Gilles, of No. 600 West Forty-seventh street, who is the chief electrician on Ellis Island, and who says he had formerly no superstition whatever, next purchased the pin, with the understanding that he should keep it a week on trial, and if nothing of evil befell him in that time he was to pay for it. The first day he wore it he fell from an electric light pole on the island and was severely injured. He attributed his mishap to the opal, and immediately returned the pin to Hampton, saying he would not have it as a gift.

Hampton, who was mate of the steamer Mattewan last Summer, says he found the scarfpin on board the Mattewan, and on the very day he found it the steamer, which was plying to and from Glen Island, ran into a coal dock at pier 7, Hoboken, and was badly damaged. Several people were thrown from their feet and some from seats, and a panic followed among the passengers, and two women fainted.

"Some days after, on August 6 of last year," said Hampton, "the boiler of the Mattewan blew up because of a bolt giving way, and the steamer had to be laid up. I was wearing the fatal opal all this time without dreaming of its influence. Soon after I put it away, and did not wear it again for some months. A few weeks ago I was wearing the pin, and I saw one of the immigrants in danger, and I saved him from falling overboard. He misunderstood my kindly intentions and services, and we got into a fight, in which he nearly kicked my face off."

Hampton will bear the marks of the immigrant's kicks as long as he lives. He recited many other instances of the fatal influences and the ill luck attending the opal, and concluded a long list by saying that he was wearing the pin, and while holding the wheel of the Shackamaxon the wheel slipped and threw him across the wheelhouse and nearly killed him. He says that is the last time he will wear the unlucky jewel.

Captain Butler, of the Shackamaxon, had heard so much about the hoodoo opal that he asked to see it, and handled it freely. He says that on that same evening something went wrong with his daughter's piano while she was playing for him, and the instrument, which cost $375, has since been practically useless.

The most interesting part of the work is performed in the small hours of the night, when the cable is stopped for a few hours' rest. The entire length of the cable is then run slowly through the pit, beneath the reflector, and carefully examined. It often happens that a break in any of the strands is detected by some gripman on the road. The grip on an ordinary cable car is exceedingly sensitive, and any roughness on the cable can be felt by the hand at the grip levers.

The principal work of the watchman in the pit comes when the cable stops for the night. This consists in carefully examining the splices in the cable. There is, of course, an enormous strain on these splices, and it is not considered safe to let a single day go by without making a very thorough test of this section. These splices are each from forty to sixty feet in length. The new cables contain but one splice, and the older cables two and sometimes three splices. Before testing the splice the section must first be thoroughly cleaned. The crevices are cleaned out and scraped and carefully wiped off. The splice is then passed very slowly in front of the reflector and examined with the utmost care. Then all is supposed to be ready for the new day.

Down in the Cable Pit.

A Ceaseless Vigil of Which the Public Knows Nothing.

Uncle Sam's Treasury Not Watched Closer Than This Slender Rope of Steel.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN IT BREAKS.

A Constant Test and a Fearful Strain. The Splicing Process—How the Cables Are Cleaned.

Away down below the pavements of Broadway, in a little hole very brilliantly illuminated with electric lights, there is a man who sits day and night to watch the great Broadway cable. The watch is relieved from time to time so that there may always be a very wide-awake man with his eye on the cable, to detect the first sign of any weakness and prevent accidents.

The pit in which this watchman keeps his vigil is a small rectangular hole, extending below the sub-cellar of the power station at Houston street. It lies directly beneath the pavement on the west side of Broadway. Near this point the great cables are diverted from the Broadway slot and conducted by a complex series of wheels to the level of the pit. The busy cable passes out at one end of the pit, and then returns to the street by the same route, so that it travels through the pit in both directions. A cluster of incandescent lamps hangs directly over the flying cable, and their light is thrown by a powerful reflector directly upon the iron ropes. This dazzling light enables the watchman to detect any flaw or break.

The watchmen who keep this constant vigil never lift their eyes for a single moment from the spot where the cable rushes before the reflector. The work is so trying the watch is divided up between three men who relieve one another every few hours. The most common accident to the cable is for one of the steel strands to break. The cable is composed of eight such strands, and the parting of any one of them is likely to prove disastrous. When this accident happens one end of the broken strand protrudes more or less from the cable. If the break be slight the location of the flaw is observed and mended when the cable is stopped for the night. If a break occurs, however, which endangers the cable, signals are at once sent to the chief engineer, and the cable is hastily slowed down or stopped altogether. A gang of workmen are always ready to start out at an instant's notice to repair such an accident. The break is located on the road and the workmen are hustled to the manhole nearest the point from which access is to be had to the cable. The repairs are always made in such cases for only temporary wear, so that the line of blocked cars may be got under way with the least possible delay.

The Kaiser's Strong Points.

Features of the German Emperor's Make-Up That Stamp Him as an Extraordinary Man.

Has a Nose That Indicates Aggression, but His Ears Are Signs of Generosity.

TYRANNY IS SHOWN IN HIS CHIN.

Possesses the Eye of a Practical Joker and a Brow of Fairness—Has a Fist of Defiance and a Foot of Heedlessness.

Berlin, Jan. 25.—Kaiser Wilhelm will be thirty-seven years old Monday. He has been upon the throne of Germany only eight years, but in that short span he has stamped himself upon the history of the world. When he became Emperor he said:

"Germany, at its present power, is only eighteen years old. Within the next ten years she will come into her majority, and the world shall hear of it."

Wilhelm has kept his promise, as the world already knows.

Wilhelm's strong points show on the surface of him. No one looking at that strong fist and firm chin could doubt him to be a man extraordinary. The very curl of his mustache shows it. The Kaiser is the most interesting object of analytical study known.

The strongest point of the Kaiser's make-up is his nose. It was that long, straight nose, with the hump in the middle, that first brought the name of Wilhelm to public notice. That was a year after he came into power. The first move of that nose was to become tyrannical, arbitrary and aggressive. It sniffed around for abuses, and curled itself at the chip upon the owner's shoulder. Bismarck would not take any notice of the imperial chip and was knocked down himself in consequence.

But the Kaiser's ear is the ear of generosity. If he hadn't owned it he would never have listened to the voice of the people and forgiven Bismarck. Wilhelm's ears have always been a source of mortification to him. Once he sent the Empress's lady-in-waiting from the room because she made a remark about large ears.

The Kaiser's chin is a sure indication of tyranny. It is too much of a chin. To be nearer perfection it should be more retreating, less rounding.

William always keeps his best foot forward. If the Kaiser does any fighting he will be known as the warrior who went to battle with one limp foot and one useless hand. William, from his birth, has had a partial paralysis of one-half the body, particularly affecting the hand. This disabled arm he keeps well out of sight or places it in some clever way. His courtiers forget he has it. Other men with his infirmity would be miserable with it.

That one able foot, well booted, is the foot that steps forward sometimes too soon, but continually forward. It is the foot that steps into China when a foot isn't needed there. It is the foot that points toward Russia when the Russians wish it would stay away. It is the foot that would like to tread over the Japanese territory with a feeling of ownership.

The Kaiser's eye is of the type that is known as eccentric. It can be discovered by a drooping lid over a very bright eye. Practical jokers have this eye. They gleam at you, then veil their shrewdness. It is a capable eye, but a careless one, careless of your feelings, of its own.

The Emperor's eye sees something funny in handing a drinking horn to every newcomer. The horn is a stag's horn with gold mounting. It is made so that the drinker cannot quite get his mouth to the horn. This great cup the Emperor fills with wine from the Imperial vaults, and bids his new hunting guest welcome to the woods of Potsdam. The new guest, highly flattered, lifts the horn to his lips and throws his head back. The next minute he is drenched with wine. Then the Kaiser laughs so immoderately that his attendants have to warn him to cease.

That eye is the one that sees something ludicrous in the fact that his little experimental yachts break down in shallow water, making all the ladies wade to land; and it fairly weeps with laughing tears when a courtier, deceived by a clever presentment, tries to cut a piece of rubber duck upon his plate.

The best trait of the Emperor is his brow. It is the brow of absolute fairness.

But the fist backs up the brow when fairness is misunderstood. That fist might be envied by Peter Maher if the thumb were not too long for a prize-fighter. That thumb is the thumb of a scholar. It would be torn off prize-fighting, but it is a thumb that could easily make a try at holding the world under it.

More than that, the Kaiser Wilhelm was born almost upon the day that afterwards proved the birthday of his country. When the Germans cry "Hoch!" Monday they cry it for the double birthdays of Kaiser and country.

The Kaiser's Strong Points.

One Cent Car Fare in Newark.

The Cheapest Ride in the World to Be Had in the Jersey Town.

Peculiar Features of a Line That Is Only One Mile in Length.

AVERAGE DAILY RECEIPTS ARE $4.

People of an Economical Turn Do Strange Things to Save Four Cents—Cheap Transit Not Likely to Last Much Longer.

The cheapest street car ride in the world is to be had in Newark. For one cent passengers are carried from the North Newark Station of the Greenwood Lake Railway to the Essex Station of the Erie—a distance of one mile. The cars, which are yellow and white affairs of antique pattern, run on Washington avenue, following the Passaic River. There are just two cars on the entire line, employing three drivers. Two work while the other rests. It takes about a half an hour to get from one end of the road to the other. The cars are never crowded, the average daily receipts being only about four hundred cents.

Bright gold letters on the outside of the cars announce they run to Elizabethport, Long Island and Union Depot. But they don't, and why the names of these places are carried on the cars no one has been able to understand.

Cheap as the fare is, many patrons of the road have numerous complaints to make. Some of them think that children ought to be carried for half fare, and others can't understand why the company doesn't issue transfers.

People of an economical turn go a long distance out of their way to get the benefit of the one-cent line. They will leave trains at way stations before getting into Newark, and trudge through rain, snow and mud to the cheap railway. They lose time and they ruin their clothes, but they save on car fares and are happy.

In a prominent place in each car it is announced that no person is allowed to ride free. The reasonableness of it strikes every fair-minded passenger. The company needs all the cents it can get to make both ends meet. Its expenses are not light. It has salaries to pay, and twenty-four horses to feed. Each horse eats ten pound of grain and twelve of hay every day. In return for this feed he makes six round trips.

It is intended to run the cars by electricity before long. When this change occurs the one-cent railway will probably be no more.

Freight Clerk of Noble Blood.

Possible Heir to an Earldom Who Lives on Bleecker Street.

Just Left a Fortune by a Titled Relative Whose Friendship He Enjoyed.

REFUSES ALL OFFERS OF PROMOTION

Prefers to Enjoy Life in a Minor Position Rather Than Assume Responsibility — A Strange Character.

Whatever the members of the Society of the Descendants of the Ancient and Honorable Dames of the State of New York, and kindred organizations with equally high sounding titles, may say, it is a fact that the aristocratic publication known as the Elite Directory does not contain a tithe of the names of persons whose birth and antecedents entitle them to such recognition. As a matter of fact, those persons who possess titles do not live on Murray Hill at all, but in the meaner quarters of the city. Patents of nobility are plentiful on First and Second avenues, and even Bleecker street can produce a resident who is the scion of one of the proudest houses in the peerage of Great Britain.

A few years after the close of the war a young man applied at the office of the Old Dominion Steamship Company, in this city, for employment. He gave his name as Octavius Tennyson Wemyss, and was given a position as clerk on the dock receiving freight. For the past twenty-five years this man has filled the duties to which he was first assigned, steadily refusing all offers of promotion and advancement in the company, and turning an equally deaf ear to the golden promises of ex-Mayor Hugh J. Grant, and other powerful Tammany men with whom he is on terms of intimacy, and who would be glad to secure him an appointment in the public service. Dreaming of the possibility of a coronet descending to him, and more unlikely things have happened, he let the world wag, and spent the greater part of his life on the dock, a few hundred feet away from the noise and hustle of West street.

Mr. Wemyss was born in Fairhaven, Md., fifty-six years ago. His father was the younger brother of the late Earl of Wemyss and March in the peerage of Scotland, and Baron Wemyss in the peerage of Great Britain. The former titles were conferred by the First Charles and William III., respectively, and the English patent, which carries with it a seat in the House of Lords, by George IV., in 1831. The family have rich lands and a castle on Wemyss Bay, an arm of the Firth of Clyde, near Greenock and adjoining the possessions of the powerful Marquis of Bute. Two years ago Mr. Wemyss paid a visit to Wemyss Castle, and was warmly received in the home of his illustrious ancestors by the old Earl. The latter died a short time ago, and among the bequests was one to his American relative, who had impressed him favorably. This money Mr. Wemyss will go to Scotland to claim in a few weeks' time.

In this age of ridiculous pretension to ancient lineage, it is quite refreshing to meet with such an unassuming individual as Mr. Wemyss. Until the windfall came to him neither his employers nor his fellow-clerks were aware of his close connection with the aristocracy. They knew he had many friends in the South, especially among the Lee family of Virginia, and that he had commanded a troop in the Fourth Virginia Cavalry during the war; but this was about the sum and substance of their information on the subject. Mr. Wemyss is single, and boards at No. 88 Perry street, a big tenement house, which stands on the corner of Bleecker street. Not a very savory neighborhood, to be sure, but he declares that even when he gets his fortune, he will not desert the friends he has known nearly all his life.

When a visitor called upon him recently, Mr. Wemyss was found playing a rare old violin, to the music of which a number of young people who live in the house were dancing and making merry. He has a passion for the violin, and most of his earnings have gone for the purchase of fine instruments of this sort. He said he was glad, of course, to have been left a fortune, especially as it was wholly unexpected, but that it had come rather late to do him much good. Members of his family, however, he said, were generally noted for their longevity, the old earl who died recently having been born in 1818 and only succeeded to the title in 1883, so that the money would be useful to him when he could no longer work on the steamship company's pier. Quite a number of the members of the Wemyss family have been comfortably provided for in the various branches of the British service, and Mr. Wemyss was given to understand that there was a chance for him if he would resign his American citizenship and become an English subject; but, like other offers of advancement, this was refused.

Aaron Burr's Watch.

[The Jewellers' Circular.]

Aaron Burr's watch is in possession of Princeton College. It is a French repeater, with Huntington case, and was a gift from Richard C. Edwards, of New York. This watch is supposed to have been imported in 1755, and was carried by Burr until 1830, when he pawned it with Tenny, a broker, at Broadway and Murray street, New York, for $30. He gave the pawn ticket to one of Mr. Edwards's relatives, who kept it and later gave it to the donor.

A Steamer On Wheels.

Queer Qualities of an Amphibious Craft Up in Denmark.

It Is Equally at Home on a Railroad or in the Ocean.

TRAVELS ABOUT AT A LIVELY SPEED.

Outgrowth of an Idea Originated by Captain Eads—If a Complete Success the New Invention Will Be Pushed.

In the land-locked waters in the North of Seeland, one of the islands which form part of the kingdom of Denmark, may now be seen a steamboat which is, without exception, the most remarkable craft in the world.

It is, so to speak, amphibious, for it possesses the dual qualification of being a vehicle on land as well as a boat on the water. When in the latter element it is driven by means of a screw in the ordinary fashion. But as soon as this extraordinary vessel reaches a certain tongue of land which separates the lakes across which its daily course is directed, it crawls ashore, propels itself on wheels across the isthmus until it reaches the other side, and then takes to the water again as placidly as a duck settling forth to swim. All this is accomplished in the quietest and most matter-of-fact way, without any interruption whatever to the continuity of the journey.

The idea of a boat capable of rendering this dual service is not new. A scheme was brought forward some years ago by the well-known American engineer, Captain Eads, for the construction of a ship which should be capable of crossing the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and should thus abolish the barrier placed by nature between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. His plan bore no practical fruit, but the notion was not lost sight of. A Swedish engineer named Magnell took it up and finally realized the profit on a smaller scale by building and launching the Swan, as this new Danish boat is called.

The Swan is not quite fifty feet long, with a beam of nearly ten feet. Her engines are of twenty-seven horse-power, and she is capable of carrying 70 persons. Across the isthmus runs a railroad, which at the landing place is carried down for some little distance beneath the surface of the water. When the Swan is close to the shore an iron lever is pressed down, and establishes connection between the axle of the screw and the axles of two pairs of wheels under the bottom of the craft. The wheels are thus made to revolve by the same power that up to this point has driven the boat through the water. They are deeply grooved, so as to have a firm hold upon the rails laid down to receive them. While the boat is gradually leaving the lake her screw continues to work at a diminished rate of speed, and by beating the surface of the water assists her to land.

As soon as the operation of landing is effected the screw is, of course, high and dry in the air, and the swan then runs across the isthmus on her wheels, which continue to revolve until they are once more disconnected from the screw, when the boat enters the water on the other shore.

The bottom of the boat is perfectly flat, so that the vessel lies low on the wheels and is, indeed, raised only a few inches above the railroad. The wheels work in watertight drums, which prevent any water from entering the boat, but which are themselves filled with water during the passage across the lake. The landing and launching are facilitated by wooden piles placed on the shore in such a way as to guide the boat when approaching or leaving the railroad. How smoothly and quickly the whole affair works may be gathered from the fact that the Swan makes at least ten trips a day, crossing the isthmus at every trip. The joint stock company formed to promote the undertaking expects to construct several more boats on the same principle as soon as the commercial success of the Swan, which began running some months ago, is assured.

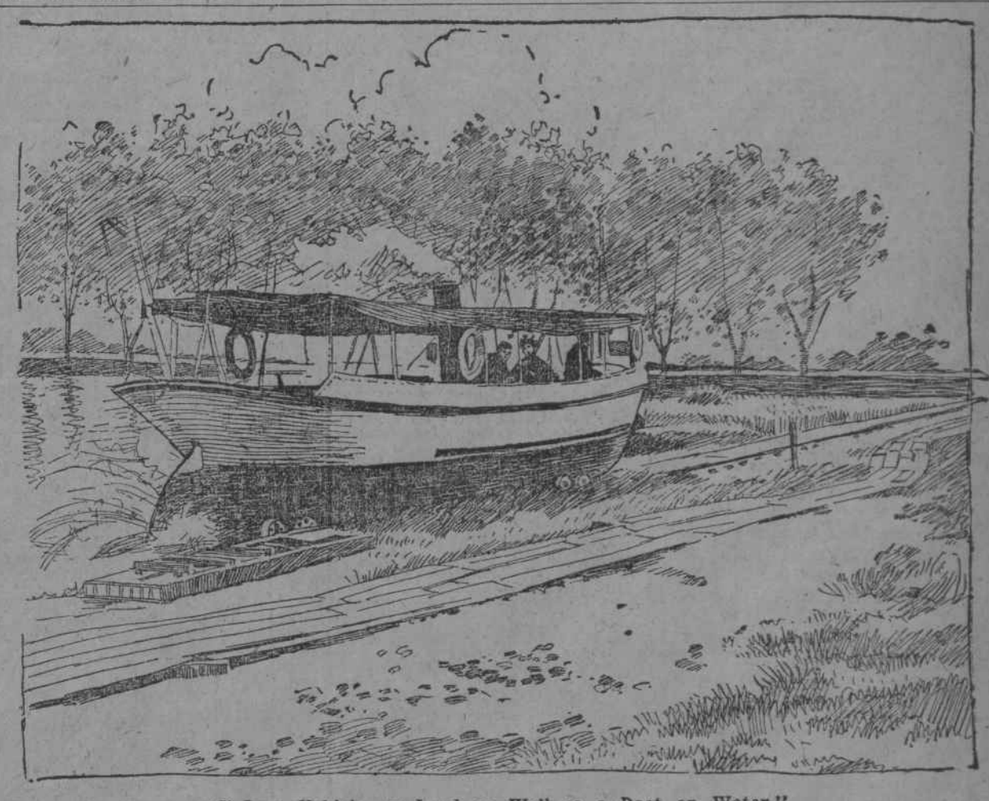
Cardinal Manning's Marriage.

[A Letter Printed in the Westminster Gazette.]

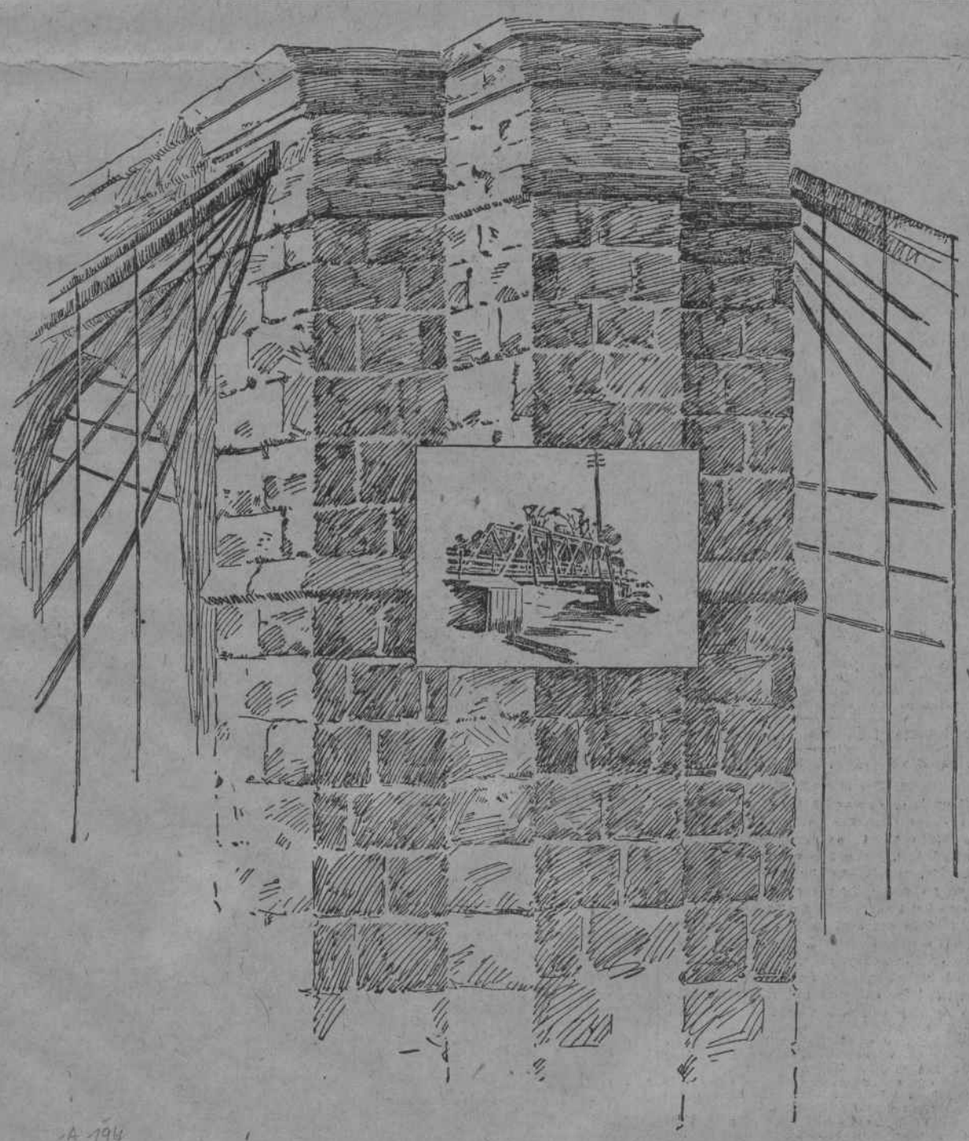
A reviewer, quoting from Mr. Purcell's "Life of Cardinal Manning," says:

"As a priest and Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, he never alluded to his marriage. * * * So effectually was the story of his marriage suppressed that at his death Catholics, with one or two exceptions, as well as the general public, knew nothing of his married life."

More than "one or two" knew of it. I should say that every one at St. Charles's, Bayswater, knew of it thirty-eight years ago. As Dr. Manning, and Superior of the Oblates of St. Charles Borromeo, the late Cardinal always kept on his writing table in his ascetically furnished little room a charmingly executed miniature of a very sweet face. I had the audacity to ask, not of Dr. Manning, but of one of the community, whose was this portrait. The answer was simple; I have never forgotten it, and always called it to mind whenever subsequently I heard the Cardinal described as "cold and unsympathetic." "That," was the answer, "is the portrait of his wife. He always keeps it there." I wish Mr. Purcell, whose work I have not yet had the opportunity of reading, had known this. Perhaps he may be inclined to insert it as a note. I am, Sir, yours faithfully, S.



"It Is a Vehicle on Land as Well as a Boat on Water."



How the Smallest Iron Bridge in the World Would Look Against One of the Brooklyn Bridge Towers.

(Drawn by a Journal staff artist.)